

anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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WHO NEEDS LEADERS?

THE widest series of strikes to hit Britain since the war is drawing to a close.

It is ending as it began: piecemeal. Which is to be expected, given the nature of our trade union movement.

Thankfully, the days when it could all have been called a 'Communist Plot' have passed, not least because nobody takes the Communist Party seriously nowadays. But nobody has placed the 'blame' on any other party of the so-called 'Left' either - because 'politics' whether of the Right or Left, is now so discredited that not even the frantic mouthpieces of the media, trying to justify the establishment point of view - and what else are they there for - could find a Left party with enough influence to substantiate their placing of the blame.

Just a vague 'Anarchy' - that's all they could scream about. And of course for them - whether they be the CBI or journalists whose jobs seem to be secure for the time being - 'Anarchy' means chaos.

People taking decisions for themselves; workers at the point of production deciding what they will do and why - this is 'chaos' for those who think that only leaders and properly elected representatives, spokesmen or usually reliable sources of information, are capable of responsible thought and action.

The idea that 'ordinary' workers - especially the low paid - dust collectors and the like - are to be taken seriously even as members of 'the nation' does not seem to occur to responsible guardians of the nation's good.

Altogæter, over the past few weeks, over a million workers have been engaged in struggles to defend their standards of living against the '5 per cent' policies of the Labour Government. They have been described as bully boys, as holding the country to ransom, etc, etc as though they are not part of the nation at all. As long as they do as they are told, keep their heads down and keep on working, come what may, and clamour into khaki uniform to defend their freedom if the national interest demands it - then they are the salt of the earth and jolly good Britishers, but if they practice their sense of injustice and demand a little freedom for themselves against the economic interests of their

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WHO NEEDS LEADERS?

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employers and their Government— then, somehow, they are no longer part of the nation.

And the nation, the proper, pukka, highly paid, responsible, elected, ethical, far-seeing and righteous, second-home-in-the-country, chicken-in-every-pot and two-cars-in-the-garage citizens

of our property-owning democratic nation, closes its Christian ranks against the bad anarchic breath of those who actually do the work.

And, brothers and sisters of the Left, may we point out yet again that this includes your proper trade union leaders and your actual Labour Government no

less than the more obvious class enemies of the Conservative Party and the Right in general

In our last issue, which was delayed in appearing for a variety of reasons, only one of which was the weather, we poured some scorn on the journalistic comments of those who saw 'anarchy' in the failure of the TU leaders to control their members, and who actually went so far as to diagnose an emergence of 'syndicalism' as one of the problems. One of the dangers, indeed.

We might have appeared to be wrong, inasmuch as there was clearly a rebellion against reluctant leaderships by the rank-and-file, but we claim a certain amount of experience in observing and analysing these events - and we know damn well that most of the militants who spat at Jim Callaghan and ignored the directives of their leaders will nevertheless vote faithfully for the party he leads and happily go on paying large salaries to those same union leaders.

When workers take action in the heat of the moment, and act in their own interests at last, they invariably take the right action. Unfortunately, when the situation cools down, they go back to thinking along the same old lines and take the easy way out - especially, ironically, if they have won the struggle and things don't seem so bad after all.

And there is no doubt that this is a struggle that is being won. The Labour Government's 5 per cent policy is in tatters - and triumphant workers are settling for magnificent 16 per cents and 8.8 per cents. Big deal! In a year's time they will be looking at each other and saying 'Why ain't we better off?' while their leaders and the politicians go on calling for sacrifice and concern for the good of the nation...

When workers realise that they don't need leaders at all; when they think in terms of occupying the factories and taking them over, rather than shivering outside the gates; when they demand the abolition of the whole stupid wages system and refuse to vote or work for renegade leaders of any kind - then we can talk realistically of anarchy and see syndicalism as a means to that end.

But whenever any workers go to the polls in the next election, or bother to vote for a general secretary of their union - knowing that their experience this last month has taught them that it is their own strength that matters - then we shall know the lesson has still not been learnt.

EDITORS

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF AND OTHER? LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS



In country A
Generalissimo B governs.
He is a dictator.



Colonel C organises a
military rebellion, and
the people support him.



Triumph of the
Revolution!



Dictator B escapes
with the Government
funds.



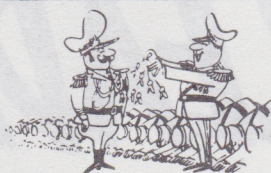
The country is ruined and
it is necessary to start
again from scratch.



Colonel C promises
elections & progress.



The United States
recognises the regime of
Colonel C.



The Army
promotes him to General.



Colonel C forgets
his promises and promotes
himself to Generalissimo.



Twenty years have passed!
Generalissimo C
is a dictator.



Colonel D organises a
military rebellion—and
the people support him.



Triumph of the
Revolution!



Dictator C escapes
with the Government
funds.



The country is ruined and
it is necessary to start
again from scratch.



The United States
recognises the regime of
Colonel D.

TRANSLATED by CLAUD from RUTA

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REPORTS

NUCLEAR POWER - 'A VITAL ISSUE FOR THE ANARCHIST MOVEMENT'

AS you probably know there are now a great many anarchists and libertarians involved in the struggle against nuclear power. In fact, it may well be true to say that there are more anarchists in the Torness Alliance than can be found in anarchist groups. In other words, the nuclear issue has become, de facto, a vital issue for the anarchist movement.

The argument, however, is not merely about numbers. There are to my mind two major areas for discussion. The first is the importance of nuclear power itself and the other is how the struggle is to be organised.

Many feminists say that the nuclear industry is a prime example of patriarchal structures and thinking gone mad. Many anarchists would claim that it is an example of authoritarian centralisation gone mad. We are probably both right. Nuclear power is a) bloody dangerous, b) irreversible (it can only be slowed down, not stopped completely, as we already have thousands of tons of extremely dangerous material which will

have to be guarded virtually for all eternity), c) very expensive, d) an aspect of the tendency towards concentration of power (there is already an armed nuclear police force with unlimited powers of harassment) and e) something which the state is fanatically bent on promoting whatever the wishy-washy environmentalists at Friends of the Earth central have to say about it, and whatever the cost in terms of life and money.

In this part of the world we are lucky in that the authoritarian left have left the anti-nukes campaign alone so far. It is effectively a coalition of the more socially aware environmentalists and non-violent anarchists, along with various others in smaller numbers. In terms of how to organise on a decentralised basis it could be said that the anti-nuclear movement has taken anarchist ideas much further than the anarchist movement as such ever did.

Everybody should try to make it to the Torness festival/occupation on 4-7 May. Contact your local anti-nuclear or FOE

group about transport arrangements. We will be organising workshops about anarchism and nuclear power at Torness.

Please try to cooperate with the spirit of the event and treat those you disagree with with due respect rather than haranguing them, and bear in mind that large groups are always expected to split up into smaller groups. It would also be helpful if people could get themselves informed about the issues beforehand. There will, however, be talks, slide-shows, exhibitions, street theatre, films and all kinds of other things to inform the ill-informed.

Another point to consider is that many people in the Alliance are perhaps justifiably worried about overly-enthusiastic anarchists or others alienating the locals by too heavy an approach. At the risk of stating the painfully obvious, banners are OK on the site but don't wave them around in local pubs.

Hope to see you all there.

JOHN ROBERTS - for
Cardiff Anarchist Group

Leeds

THE Leeds Anarchist Group, which has just entered its fourth year of existence, recently decided to commit itself to at least one public event each month. The first, in November, was a benefit in aid of 'Persons Unknown'. About 60 people came and with money taken at the door, money from a raffle and, most surprising of all, the landlord's donation of a third of his takings (presumably to encourage our custom) we made a straight profit of £54. The second was a public meeting on 13 December Albert Meltzer came to speak on the CNT and 29 people came to hear him. We were unable to organise anything in January because of the dislocation caused by the winter holidays. On 21 February we will be holding a workshop on 'Libertarian Education' at the Trades Club, Savile Mount, off Chapeltown Road at 8 pm. On 28 February the Leeds University Black and Red Society will be holding a meeting about 8 pm. at the University (Room LG 15) addressed by John Quail, the author of *The Slow Burning Fuse: The Lost History of the British Anarchists*.

ANTHONY KEARNEY

Vote nobody

THIS year is going to be the year of elections! Not only will we be treated to the five-yearly general election, but in addition we shall have the first direct elections to the European assembly. While we do not know the time of the general election, the election for the European assembly will take place on 7 June.

Also, there will be the customary round of municipal and local elections, not to mention the opportunity for those lucky voters in Scotland and Wales to place their 'x' for or against devolution.

While the psephologists are in for a fruitful year, the parties at Westminster fear that the apathy of the electorate will be fuelled by the over-exposure to the democratic process. With so many elections (five in some areas) the interest is sure to flag.

Perhaps with the voters being asked to vote so many times this year for Tweedledum or Tweedledee, the question of what elections achieve will not be lost under the piles of lies and appeals to prejudice. Whatever the temptations, these elections should not be ignored by anarchists, and therefore we wish to draw readers' attention to the text of the 'alternative' election leaflet produced by libertarian

socialist groups and individuals active in the Greater Manchester area.*

Also we would like to draw attention to the fact that the IWA - AIT (the anarcho-syndicalist international) is organising and coordinating a campaign against the European elections throughout western Europe. We will keep readers of FREEDOM informed of further developments. Because it 'will be claimed that all opposition to the elections is nationalist' the Northern Secretariat of the AIT suggests that 'an international demonstration should be arranged by the IWA-AIT after May Day'.

R. M.

* The above-mentioned leaflet, 'Vote Nobody' is available from M/CR SWF & M/CR Solidarity, c/o 109 Oxford Rd, Manchester 1. If readers wish to use this for their own leaflets they are welcome to do so. The North East Anarchist Federation also report in their latest bulletin on their initiative on the EEC elections and have circulated a discussion paper (by Martin Spence of Black Jake on the Common Market and what it represents,

WHO IS THE FAIREST?

THE appeal by Astrid Proll against extradition to West Germany was adjourned on 15 February by Widgery, the Lord Chief Justice, pending a decision on Astrid's nationality in the Family Division of the High Court.

The defence are still hoping they can argue that a British national cannot be extradited to the Federal Republic - despite the infamous new 'Lex Proll'.

And the German authorities are doing their best to look soft and cosy, less in the face of criticism in this country (with its staunchly pro-German regime press) than in Germany itself. In an interview with the magazine *Stern* the Federal Minister of the Interior, Gerhard Baum, suggested that Astrid would be treated leniently if she returned to Frankfurt of her own accord. He added that the trial would probably start quickly because the evidence was ready, and that if this were not the case 'I could imagine that she would be allowed to return to England, with appropriate conditions and guarantees, until the beginning of her trial in Frankfurt'.

Although this was mere speculation on Baum's part, confused stories at once appeared that Astrid had offered to give herself up. These have been dismissed by her lawyers. Germany is a 'federal' state. What Gerhard Baum says in Bonn is not necessarily what Herbert Guenther,

Justice Minister for Hesse says in Frankfurt, or for that matter, the Frankfurt assize court where she would be tried and where, according to Guenther, any decision about exemption from imprisonment would have to be made.

While Astrid wrote to Hesse for clarification her brother, Thorwald and others recalled the case of Katherina Hammarschmidt, the alleged RAF member who went back to Germany from France under a similar offer of leniency several years ago and who, in return for her good faith, died of a cancer that the prison authorities left untreated during a long and crucial period despite numerous appeals on the part of her defence to get proper medical care.

The extreme right Christian Democrats have also entered the arena. Stanitzek, CDU deputy and lawyer, has demanded 'no special rights for Astrid Proll' on the grounds that this would be 'in violation of the Constitution'.

So it can be seen how, already a victim of State 'justice', Astrid has now also become a pawn in the party political power game:

Mirror, mirror on the wall
Who is the fairest (ie. most constitutional) of us all?

Gaia

MORE NEWS FROM THE 'CONSTITUTIONAL STATE'

- 200 people have been charged with 'defamation of the State'. The charge concerns a text written by students in protest against another relating to the famous 'Buback - an Obituary'. The text contains the apparently dangerous words: 'You are nothing. The State is everything. We are number one in the world.' (Meant sarcastically, of course). And on the back is a drawing of an 'arse with ears' mounted on the head of a Federal eagle. A mass trial is expected ...

- The 'Agit' printers (see FREEDOM vol. 39 no. 10, 27.5.78) have been given up to 1 year's imprisonment for printing urban guerrilla texts in *Info-Bug*, a paper of the Berlin Undogmatic Left. The paper is edited by different groups, none of whom appear to be known to the prosecution who thus picked on the printers instead.

- Klaus Croissant, the RAF lawyer, has been sentenced to 2½ years' gaol and a 4-year ban from legal practice after being found guilty of running an 'information system' for his RAF clients. Having already spent 19 months in prison he could be released in the spring. He could also be rearrested and charged with more serious offences which the French appeal court excluded from the conditions of their extradition order. But under this order he must be given 30 days to leave Germany should he wish to do so.

- Werner Hoppe (see last issue) has at last been released from custody after doctors found him 'unfit for imprisonment'.

PRISONS & POLITICAL STATUS

POLITICAL status is an uncomfortable term for anarchists. Because prison is a political weapon of the ruling class then all prisoners are political, we say. When pushed a bit more we qualify this by saying that we don't of course support the John Stonehouses or Robert Relfs, but that prison is principally a method of state/class control and must be destroyed. Whatever way a community decides to deal with its own who commit anti-social crimes, it should not be by incarceration.

This sounds fine as does most anarchist theory. However in practice we often find ourselves in a dilemma. Most of the struggles going on against exploitation and domination, which are the hallmarks of bourgeois/state rule, tend themselves in their structure and methods to reflect the same hallmarks, to varying degrees, of the society which spawned them. The trade unions are an obvious example. Even most of the rank and file groups which grew within them and in opposition to their leadership, failed to transcend the hierarchical and economic conditioning of their role in society. The anarchist response has been to either critic-



ally support these struggles or to avoid the dilemma altogether by working in areas which offer more scope for libertarian perspective.

In the north here we are in a similar circumstance. The prison system, tied in with the 'reformed' RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary), the 'open' courts (juryless), and the new increased conviction rates (based mainly on the torture techniques to secure 'confessions'), is one of the British state's weapons to restore stability to our 'troubled' province. For this reason and because of the anarchist movement's traditional and total opposition to prisons, we should challenge at every opportunity the government's attempts to make its prison system more acceptable, and support those inside who challenge and whose position is more precarious.

So where is the dilemma 'Political Status'. Those 386 men in Long Kesh who are on the 'blanket and dirt' protest, and the 44 women in Armagh who refuse to wear prison uniform, are members of either the Provos or IRSP (Irish Revolutionary Socialist Party). Both of these groups are nationalist and statist.

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"I WILL NOT PERMIT ANARCHY"

Well, to some extent I fell into the trap that I pointed out myself. Events in Iran moved even faster than I expected. I thought that the last government would hold things together for rather longer & I thought that the army would cause more trouble. It just goes to emphasise that you can't keep a people down. And that the people have as usual, shown more political awareness than the media, they knew all along what Bakhtiar ("brave" according to the western press) represented. Anyway I'll summarise events, then review the present position and, if I'm feeling a bit brave, venture some prophesy, or at least hopes.

Briefly, the Iranian people had got pissed off. They were oppressed by one of the most brutal systems in the world, all hints of change (the 'Shah-People White Revolution') were a blatant farce, a small group of people were flaunting ostentatious wealth, slum conditions in the cities were appalling, agriculture was in ruins (it has got to the stage where food has to be imported). And to add insult to injury they were continuously told how much they loved the bastard who symbolised it all. They went onto the streets and went on strike for a variety of reasons, some political, some religious, some others. But it was united round one thing. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and all he represented had to go. There'd been demonstrations before and they had all met the same reaction. But this time it was unstoppable. Within a few months the economy was paralysed and the cities in turmoil. The Shah wasn't sure what to do. Brutality had always worked in the past. He dithered. Eventually he fell back on precedent. He could repeat the ploy of 1953, leave for a while and then engineer a comeback. In the meantime an interim government could work to hold things, keep the opposition tendencies separate and the like. It didn't work. Bakhtiar and his regime were transparently tools (except, of course, to western journalists) so they were destroyed as well. In the final showdown the people were armed for the first time. Fortunately, the core of the army had enough sense to face facts and bloodshed was minimised.

So, what are the present positions of the various parties? The most powerful is still the people themselves, armed and determined. Let's hope they stay like that. The incumbent power is an alliance between the mosque and secular politicians. The latter can be assumed to be just politicians. Some of them do have records of 'opposition'. What this basically means is that they were involved in the National Front in the fifties.

Bazargan, for instance, is an old friend of Bakhtiar and protected him last week. There's not much to choose between them. Bakhtiar's present whereabouts are uncertain; if he's still in the country we must assume he is still being protected. Khomeini is still the real centre (why are people so stupid?) He now rules by diktat (after all, firman is a Persian word). Censorship is applied. He "will not permit anarchy!" He is developing definite signs of megalomania. Any opposition is guilty of 'blasphemy' and is liable to have their hands chopped off. He has been referred to as 'Imam' (roughly equivalent to Moses).

Until the takeover by the Shah's father the mosque had great power in Iran. This was diminished and the state became more secularised. The priest on the ground is known as a 'mullah', his lobby as the 'ul-emma'. The leaders, equivalent, say, to bishops, are the now notorious 'ayatollahs'. Half a dozen of these are theoretically in charge but of course in practice Khomeini dominates. Shariat-maderi, the ayatollah of Tehran, has lost out a lot by compromising too much with the Shah's regime. Khomeini gained from his geographical separation. According to Shia doctrine there have been eleven imams. One of these is buried in Mashad in east Iran and all good Iranians make a pilgrimage there. They are all waiting for the twelfth and last to appear. Some think he has, as Khomeini.

So these are the people who are consolidating their regime. They intend to purge the army and then reestablish it under their control. There is to be a referendum on whether to have an 'Islamic Republic'. This is to be a simple Yes/No vote. Actual details, constitutions and so on will be revealed when thought appropriate. Censorship is operated. Control is very neat, operating in a similar manner to that in Communist countries; any disagreement is counter-revolutionary.

The overall effect is therefore to set up a substitute for the old regime with, however, at least some popular consent. There are opposition groupings. Liberals, for instance. But I doubt if they will have much practical effect. There is a 'left'. The Communists (Tudeh) can be neglected. They had some influence up to the 1950s but were always rigid Moscow-line, and largely discredited themselves by constant shifts of policy and sectarianism. They collaborated with the National Front takeover in 1953 and were systematically smashed when the Shah regained power. He continually ranted about 'Communists' but there was little evidence of them.

There is a newer generation of Marxists,

officially dating themselves from a raid on a police station at Slahkal in February 1971. Activities since then have been bombings, bank raids, attacks on the police and assassinations. There are two important groups. One (Mojahedin-i Khalq) describes itself as 'Islamic Marxist'. Mojahedin means 'fighters of the Jihad' or 'holy war'. The other is more orthodox Marxist, the Cherikhafe Fedayin-i Khalq. (The 'People's Dedicated Guerrillas'). The names reveal a lot. The 'dedication' is very real. Their theory is a somewhat messy amalgamation of the usual stuff on the Armed Struggle and the Purity and Sacrifice of the Revolutionary. Both groups remain small and isolated, recruiting mainly from students. Their pantheon of martyrs is something frightening. Both groups have gained a lot of ground lately. Now, of course, they are well armed and the Provisional Government is doing its best to remedy this. In the present context Mojahedin is obviously more 'respectable'. However, they are a dangerous pressure group while they retain their autonomy and the government is trying to placate them, by offering them a role as 'national guard'. Presumably there will be an attempt to integrate them as a normal paramilitary police force. The other group, the Fedayin are a more immediate problem. I am not sure of their strength - probably about 3,000 in Tehran. The government's tactic is to try to isolate them by labelling them as counter-revolutionaries and irreligious. There has been a preliminary confrontation this week and the Fedayin backed down a bit by postponing a proposed march until Friday (the weekly holiday). It will be something of a test case. There are a number of other small left groups, Trotskyists, Maoists and what have you. There is minimal influence from Moscow whatever the western press may claim.

The other important opposition is in the various ethnic groups. Over the years there has been a policy of 'Persianisation' and the tribes have been played down. This policy is typical of its kind. Farsi is the only accepted language, regions are starved of funds, nomadic groups are forcibly settled. Insurrections have occurred at intervals, for example the Qashqai in the south rebelled in 1962-3. They were put down militarily, a few hundred people were killed. The useful tactic here was machine-gunning flocks from the air - what can a nomadic tribe do without its animals? About 40% of the population are non-Persian. Easily the largest group are the Turkish speakers of Azerbaijan and Gilan in the north-

SAM DREEN, one of the last survivors of the old Jewish anarchist movement in the East End, died in the United States earlier this month in his nineties.

Dreen was born in Vitebsk (in White Russia) in 1885. He came from a family of tailors, but his father was a teacher called Druan who died young. Sam had to start work at the age of nine, and was eventually apprenticed as a tailor. He joined the Bund (the Jewish socialist organisation in Russia) and became so active that he got into trouble with the police. In order to avoid further trouble and to evade military service, he followed his brother to Britain, being smuggled over the frontier into Germany and then getting a passage to London.

He later recalled how he and his comrades on their arrival "walked through a rough area where the inhabitants hated immigrants and threw stones at us all the way". He got work as a tailor, beginning by making soldiers' trousers for the Boer War, for which he earned 'good wages' of 30s. a week for a 14-hour day. He moved from job to job, and joined one of the Jewish tailors' unions. He later recalled: "The union work did not attract me. There was always a good attendance at the meetings, which were held on a Saturday night or on Sunday, but the members came there mostly to meet their friends, to talk and quarrel and fight. Many of them came half-drunk, spilling for a fight. Usually the meetings ended in uproar. So I didn't like the meetings, and finally I stayed away."

He also went to meetings of the various political organisations, and in 1902 he was taken by a friend to an anarchist meeting at the Sugar Loaf pub in Hanbury Street. This was where the Jewish anarchists held their public meetings on Friday evenings - a characteristic gesture against the Jewish religion - and where the Jewish religion - and where the main speaker was Rudolf Rocker, the German gentile who dominated the movement until the First World War. In 1902 he had just returned to London from a spell in Leeds, and on 20 March 1903 he revived the group's paper *Arbeter Frait* (Workers' Friend).

Dreen was immediately captivated by Rocker and attracted into the anarchist movement. "I was terribly impressed by Rocker's delivery, so I attended all his lectures in future. He spoke to us like a father to his child, like an elder brother. He had time and patience for each one of us. We were not a crowd to him, but everyone was a separate person, an individual soul. Even at a public meeting attended by thousands, you felt that Rocker was speaking to you alone. He united us, filled us with revolutionary ardour, inspired us with his clear thinking and wide knowledge, his love and understanding of art and literature and the values of culture. Rocker was our rabbi!"

Dreen's name appeared in the second issue of the revived *Arbeter Frait*, on 27 March 1903, acknowledging his contribution of 5s. and he soon became a leading member of the inner group.

SAM DREEN

-A LINK WITH ROCKER'S 'LONDON YEARS'

"I went to all their meetings and entertainments, the concerts and dances which were held on Saturdays and Sundays, and their summer excursions to Epping Forest. It brought us together, and we became firm friends. This was no ordinary political group. These were people who spent all their time together, like a closely knit family, brothers and sisters. These were what Rocker afterwards called the golden days of our youth. The memories of those days kept us friends all our lives, though we did not all continue to hold the same opinions. We were inspired by our belief in a better world that we were helping to build, and happy in our friendship, the warm friendship of each and every member of our group".

Dreen described the social activity of the *Arbeter Frait* group with particular pleasure. "We held social evenings regularly, and two or three masked balls a year. We often hired the Crown Hall in Redmans Road for concerts. Always there would be an interval for refreshments, when Rocker would stand up and there would be immediate silence. He would lecture us on some literary or topical event. We younger ones never went home. Up to two dozen young men and women would troop off to one of our homes and recline there on cushions placed on the floor to talk throughout the

night or pair off to embrace in the corners." The great event of the year was the excursion to Epping Forest, when a horse and cart brought the refreshments for the picnic and the comrades travelled by bus and train to the meeting-point. "Comrades would then gather in groups, or young men and women would pair off and meander into the forest. Suddenly a loud call would announce that Comrade Rocker was about to address the crowd. All would swiftly converge to a glade at the edge of the wood. Some would lie casually on the grass, others reclined against trees, as our teacher began his lecture".

But there was a harder side to life, and Dreen was deeply involved in the political activity of the *Arbeter Frait* group. In 1904 he was involved in the Yom Kippur riot in Spitalfields; when religious and socialist groups began fighting in Princelet Street, he led the anarchist group to help the latter. In 1905 he was present at the court of honour when German anarchists brought and Jewish anarchists rejected the accusation that Rocker was an agent of the German government.

Above all Dreen was involved in the struggle to develop an anarchist presence in the Jewish trade union movement. He took a leading part in the 1906 tailors' strike against the sweating system, which was the first peak of the *Arbeter Frait* group's influence in the East End, being made treasurer of the strike committee at the age of only 21, and reporting its progress in the *Arbeter Frait*.

After the collapse of the strike, he and a comrade went to New York to make a new start, joining the group around the *Freie Arbeter Stimme*. But in 1909 he returned to London and rejoined the *Arbeter Frait* group. Following the American example, he took the

Continued on facing page



Rocker (centre) with the 'Gentle Anarchists' - Sam Dreen

Continued from facing page

initiative in forming a joint committee of all the Jewish trade unions with some of the socialist organisations, but it soon lapsed because of the opposition of the Social Democrats. In 1909 he was also involved in the formation of the Arbeter Ring (Workers' Circle), a Jewish trade union mutual aid society transcending party differences which still survives.

By this time his main concern was indeed to keep party interests out of trade union activity. When the anarchist movement declined after the First World War, he transferred his activity not to the Communist Party, as so many others did, but to Poale Zion, the Zionist socialist organisation. The anarchists had always opposed Jewish as much as any other nationalism, but Dreen felt that the necessity to develop national as well as class identity among the Jewish people overrode such considerations.

Between the world wars he was the London representative of Poale Zion at international conferences, and after the Second World War his comrades celebrated his 70th birthday with a special dinner. Meanwhile he had risen in his trade to become a master tailor, but he always took care to pay wages above union rates

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west. Autonomous republics have been set up here a number of times, the last couple with Soviet backing (as long as it was expedient, they were then abandoned to the inevitable reprisals). The capital, Tabriz, has long been a centre for revolt. There has been recent fighting there, some of which appears to be rearguard action from pro-Shah groups. Also in the north-west are the Kurds. They are spread across several countries. For a while the Shah, and the CIA, backed them in a guerrilla war against Iraq and then ditched them. There has already been a rising here. In the south there are the Qashqai and an Arab population. There is even ironically enough the Bakhtiari. In the east are the Baluchi, spread across the borders into Afghanistan and already fighting a guerrilla war there. All these groups will want some independence. Khomeini has said that he will hold Iran together.

If the system holds together what will the future be? This is the dangerous bit, speculation. Well, it would be repressive, with the government having industrial agents in everything, i.e. the mullahs. They could be far worse than any SAVAK agent. Any 'deviant' would be repressed. Things would be probably more egalitarian. There wouldn't be as much opportunity to accumulate personal fortunes. Some, at least, of the oil revenues would go to help the people. Some sense would be made of distribution of land and industry. The small degree of freedom gained by women would go. This hasn't been that much and it has only applied to a privileged few. Middle class women have had some opportunity to get reasonable jobs. They have left off their veils. Khomeini says that women will be able to hold high offices but I doubt if this means much. After all, one of the most power-

and to cease production during strikes.

Dreen spent the last quarter of his life in the United States, where most of his family had settled, though he made occasional visits to London until quite recently. Although he had moved away from the anarchist movement nearly half a century before, he always kept fresh his memory of his time in it. He was the moving spirit behind the English edition of the extract from Rudolf Rocker's memoirs published as *The London Years* (1956), to which he contributed an epilogue. He was also the moving spirit behind the centenary meeting in memory of Rudolf Rocker held at the Toynbee Hall in the East End on 9 September 1973. And he provided much information for W. J. Fishman's history of the movement, *East End Jewish Radicals* (1975). He died in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on 3 February 1978.

Sam Dreen had a good long life, and did a good many things. But his golden years were spent in the anarchist movement here in London. As with so many who have left us, we can say that we had the best of him.

N.W.

(Material from Sam Dreen's unpublished memoirs and interviews kindly provided by Bill Fishman).

Press Fund Feb. 8 - 21

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Previously acknowledged £ 179.75.

TOTAL TO DATE £ 247.05.

ful people in the country was Ashraf, the Shah's sister (and she was as bad as him) but this did nothing for most women. The freedom was largely illusory, veiless women in western clothes were liable to be molested. Even the most 'liberated' areas were only superficially so, sexism is deeply ingrained. But there was a start.

Well, the thing is poised. There are a lot of people who will try to get the system established and a lot of people happily accept it. But a lot will not. The Iranian people have smashed one of the world's most repressive systems. They are capable of starting from here and building something. They must do it, or they will be back where they started.

SHAHIN

PRISONS AND POLITICAL STATUS

Continued from page 4

Not only do they put aside social struggles till after the 'unification' of Ireland, but it is doubtful what their commitment would be even then. The prisoners are protesting against the withdrawal of political/POW status which was granted under Whitelaw's rule. It was already in existence more or less, given the conditions created by Faulkner to intern people. These were the long corrugated huts, the wearing of their own clothes, relatively autonomous educational facilities, etc. This was mainly because of the lack of cell space. But when internment was replaced by detention the prisoners held on to their privileges only after a hunger strike.

After the general election of '74 Rees replaced Whitelaw, and so began the Labour government's efforts to portray the violent contradictions in our society as simply one of 'law and order'. As part of this there began a campaign of criminalisation of those who had 'political status'. After 1 March '75 anyone who was convicted of 'serious criminal offences' was placed in a cell instead of the compound. Kieran Nugent became the first 'blanket' protestor and when he is to be released on 13 May this year he will have spent 3 years in this condition.

As anarchists we do not want political status for a selected few. The majority of crimes for which people are inside are political in that they are against property or authority, state or private. But instead of avoiding the issue as too complicated, as we have done in the past, we now feel that Mason's attempt to present the problem as one of 'law and order' must be challenged. Rather than support political/POW status in isolation from a general critique of the prison system, or ignore it in favour of the latter, we should attempt to transcend 'political status'. The solidarity of the Irish prisoners, anarchists and 'ordinary' prisoners in the Hull jail riot is a concrete example of how this can be achieved on the inside.

This problem of status is only one aspect of our work on prisons. It may be central to republican and left groups, but that reflects their own hierarchical structure and statist aims (whether that be federated capitalism or state socialism). To this date none of them have called for (or are likely to) the abolition of prisons. We already keep contact with a small number of both 'political' and 'ordinary' prisoners. We plan in the next couple of months to raise more publicly the class nature of prisons, and the necessity in any future society for their abolition.

Of course the determination of those inside who choose the status to oppose the British state's prison system should also be supported. But the question of all prisoners being political, in fact class prisoners, must be raised, and answered.

BELFAST ANARCHIST COLLECTIVE

FREEDOMS CONTACTS PAGE

FREEDOM CONTACT PAGE

PHONE 01-247 9249

Freedom Press

IN ANGEL ALLEY
84b WHITECHAPEL HIGH ST.
LONDON E.1

Groups

ABERDEEN Libertarian group. Contact c/o 163 King St, Aberdeen.

ABERYSTWYTH. Mike Sheehan. 2 South St, Aberystwyth.

BRISTOL CITY. 4 British Road, Bristol BS3 3BW

BRISTOL Students. Libertarian Society, Students Union, Queen's Road, Bristol 8

CAMBRIDGE. Raphael Salkie, Queen's College, Cambridge.

CARDIFF. Write c/o 108 Bookshop, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.

CHELTENHAM. Contact Jerry at 23093

CORBY. Terry Phillips, 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants.

COVENTRY. John England, 48 Spencer Av, Earlsdon, Coventry.

DERBY (and environs). All two of us welcome collaborators. Contact Andrew Huckerby, 49 Westleigh Av, Derby DE3 3BY, tel: 368678.

EAST ANGLIAN Libertarians. Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex.

EXETER Anarchist Society, Univ. of Exeter, Devonshire House, Stocker Rd, Exeter.

GREENWICH & BEXLEY. Any trade unionists interested in forming a syndicalist group please contact John Ryan, 47 Binsey Walk, SE2 9 TU.

HASTINGS. Steve, 18a Markwick Terrace, St. Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex.

HIGH BENTHAM. Ask at the Dragonfly on Saturdays.

HUDDERSFIELD. Meetings every two weeks. For details phone 0484-38156 (Polytechnic Students' Union).

HULL Libertarian Collective. Pete Jordan, 70 Perth St, Hull, East Yorks. Always available for any Anarchists passing through Hull for coffee, food or a place to crash. Transport, in the form of Citroen 2CV also available.

LEAMINGTON & WARWICK. c/o 42 Bath St, Leamington Spa.

LEEDS. 29 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds 2.

LEICESTER. Anarchist group. Lyn Hurst, 41 Briarfield Drive, Leicester. Tel: 0533-21250 (days). 0533-414060 (nights). Bookshop. Blackthorn, 76 Highcross St, Leicester. Tel: 0533-21896. Libertarian Education. 6 Beaconsfield Rd, Leicester. Tel: 0533-552085.

MALVERN & WORCESTER area. Jock Spence, Birchwood Hall, Storrridge, Malvern, Worcs.

MANCHESTER. c/o Grass Roots, 109 Oxford Rd, Manchester M1.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE. Black Jake, c/o 115 Westgate Road, Newcastle NE1 4AG.

NOTTINGHAM. c/o Mushroom, 10 Heathcote St (Tel: 582506) or 15 Scotholme Av, Hyson Green (Tel: 708302).

OXFORD. Danny Simpson, Room 1, Turf St, Oxford.

PORTSMOUTH. Caroline Cahm, 25 Albany Road, Southsea, Hants.

READING University anarchists, c/o Students Union, Univ. of Reading, Whiteknights, Reading, Berks.

SHEFFIELD. Contact Sheffield Libertarian Society, P0 Box 168, Sheffield S11 8SE. Groups at above address are:

Sheffield Autonomous Anarchists, Black Cross Group, IWW, Syndicate of Initiative. John Creaghe Memorial Society.

SWANSEA. Don Williams, 24 Derlwyn, Duvant, Swansea.

THAMES VALLEY. Adele Dawson, Maymeade, 6 Congress Rd, Maidenhead (Tel: 062 2974).

WESTON-SUPER-MARE. Martyn Redman, Flat 5, 23 Milton Rd, Weston-super-Mare, Som.

WILTSHIRE. Comrades in Swindon wish to start anarchist group (as well as existing Community Arts Group). Get in touch with Mike, Groundswell Farm, Upper Stratton, Swindon, Wilts.

LIBERTARIAN FESTIVAL 1979

As yet no group has offered to host the Libertarian Festival '79. If any group is prepared to do so, please write to Pete Williams, c/o 178 Waterloo Place, Oxford Rd, Manchester 13 9QQ.

KENT

Ramsgate: Peter Ford, 22 Royal Rd

Sevenoaks: Jim Endesby, 70 Bradbourne Rd.

LEICESTER

See under Groups for address

LONDON

FEDERATION OF LONDON ANARCHIST GROUPS:-

Anarchy Collective, 37a Grosvenor Av, Tel: 359-4794. Before 7 pm.

Freedom Collective, 84b Whitechapel High St, E1, Tel: 247-9249

Hackney Anarchists, Dave, 249-7042

Kingston Anarchists, 13 Denmark Rd,

Kingston upon Thames, Tel: 549-2564.

London Workers' Group, Box W.,

182 Upper St. N1, Tel: 249-7042

Love V. Power, Box 779, Peace News (London office: 5 Caledonian Rd).

West London Anarchists, 7 Pennard Rd, W12.

ANARCHIST COMMUNIST ASSOCIATION

(Organisation of class struggle anarchists who produce their own newspaper Bread and Roses). Local contacts:

London: Danny Jakob, 88 Speedwell

House, Cornet St, Deptford, SE8.

Birmingham: Bob Prew, 13 Trinity Ct,

Trinity Rd, Aston, BG.

Burnley: Jim Petty, 5 Hollin Hill.

Glasgow: Dave Carruthers, 53 Ormonde Av, G4

MIDLANDS FEDERATION

Secretariat: c/o Andrew Huckerby,

49 Westleigh Av, Derby DE3 3 BY, Tel: 0332-3686 678. Groups in Federation include Corby, Coventry, Derby,

Leamington/Warwick, Nottingham,

Sheffield (all separately listed), Birmingham.

MANCHESTER SOLIDARITY Group, c/o 109 Oxford Rd, Manchester 13.

MOVEMENT FOR ANARCHY Experimental Group 2. Contact M.F.A.E.G. 2 at 22 George Henry St, SALFORD 5.

NORTH WEST ANARCHIST FEDERATION

c/o Grass Roots, 109 Oxford Rd, Manchester M1.

Groups are:

Burnley Anarchist Group, 5 Hollin Hill, Burnley, Lancs.

Lancaster Anarchist Group, 41 Main Rd, Galgate, Lancaster.

Manchester Anarchist Group, c/o

Grass Roots

Manchester Anarchist Organisation, c/o Jill or Jack, 21 Holmfirth St, Manchester M13.

Manchester Syndicalist Workers' Federation, c/o Grass Roots.

Newsletter & quarterly meetings. Contacts in other areas.

NORTH EASTERN ANARCHIST FEDERATION

Secretariat:- C/o Black Jake, 115 Westgate Rd, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4AG.

SCOTTISH LIBERTARIAN FEDERATION Contact: Nina Woodcock, 74 Arklay St (Top R.), Dundee. Tel: Dundee 814541

Meetings

New group forming in North London. Initial meeting to plan social on 1 March at 11 Harold Road, N8 4PL at 7.00 p.m. Please bring ideas, food, drink, guitars, pet crocodiles etc. Middle doorbell. Phone 348-5118.

The Housing Cuts, the Sale of Council Houses and the Attack on Public Housing. Action Meeting, 5 March, 6.30 p.m. Room 401 Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove, N5. Organised by Housing Action.

LEEDS UNIVERSITY BLACK & RED SOCIETY MEETING (Room LGL5) Wed 28 Feb 8pm. Addressed by John Quail, author of 'The Slow Burning Fuse; the Lost History of the British Anarchists'

ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST CONFERENCE

The next anarcho-syndicalist conference is being held in Manchester at the end of March. The exact venue and date has not been fixed yet, but any anarcho-syndicalist or sympathiser who wishes to attend should write to SWF, 109 Oxford Rd, Manchester M1 who will send details as soon as they are known. Items for discussion should be sent to the same address.

Desires

Two feminists buying house to raise children in, need sympathetic male help as GLC only mortgage big houses to engaged couples. Man must be under 30, on rising scale of pay (GLC conditions) and around 6-9 months preferably emigrating, or becoming unemployed or non-employed, or disappearing without trace after that, and using pseudonym, but anyone considered. £50 reward if necessary. London area. Contact Freedom, box. no. 666.

SORRY FOR DELAY! FREEDOM'S TYPEWRITER BROKE DOWN - DIDN'T GET ARTWORK TILL 6PM FRIDAY - THEN IAN THE PRINTER'S BACK AND RIGHT LEG WENT ON PAINFUL STRIKE!! UNTIL TUES 21/2/79.